

1. (Amended) An additive for conglomerate building materials selected from gypsum and special mortar, that comprises a solid mineral component selected from among clay and at least a modified natural gum, wherein the solid mineral component is a rheological grade sepiolite and wherein the additive is free of cellulose derivatives.

Sub C6 *112* *112* *new matter* *sepiolite*

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2. (Amended) An additive according to claim 1 comprising
20-75% by weight of the solid mineral component;
25-80% by weight of modified natural gum.

3. (Amended) An additive according to claim 1 comprising
35-60% by weight of the solid mineral component;
40-65% by weight of modified natural gum.

Cancel Claim 4 without prejudice.

5. (Amended) An additive according to claim 1, wherein the modified natural gum is at least one combination of at least two monosaccharides, glucose, mannose, galactose, and glucuronic acid, modified by etherification.

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6. (Amended) An additive according to claim 5, [characterized in that] wherein the combination of monosaccharides is etherified with an alkylene oxide selected from [among] ethylene oxide, propylene oxide and butylene oxide.